

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

I THE ACTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN JERUSALEM Acts 1-7

LESSON 6 - Stephen¹, the First Martyr² of the Church - Acts 6 and 7

KEY VERSE

And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke (Acts 6:10).

PONDER³

READ Acts Chapters 6 and 7.

WRITE the *word, phrase, or verse* that spoke to you the most. Explain. _____

THE FIRST CHURCH ASSEMBLY

READ Acts 6:1-7.

1. What was the Hellenists' ⁴ complaint against the Hebrews⁵ (v. 1)? _____

2. What would the Apostles not do (v. 2)? _____ ⁶

3. How did the twelve⁷ seek to solve this complaint (v. 3)? _____

4. What would the Apostles do instead (v. 4)? _____

5. Who did the multitude choose (v. 5)? _____

¹ Stephen - Greek *Stephanos*: victory crown.

² martyr - Greek *martus*: a witness (lit. judicially), one who bears record, one who gives his life for his faith.

³ PONDER: think about and consider carefully God's spiritual truths as revealed in the Word of God.

⁴ Hellenists: Jews who adopted the Greek culture and language.

⁵ Hebrews: native orthodox Jews who were Christians.

⁶ serve - Greek *diakoneo*: to be an attendant, wait upon as a host, friend or teacher, minister, deacon.

⁷ the twelve: the Apostles; the twelve disciples who witnessed Christ's life, death, and resurrection.

6. DESCRIBE Stephen's strong godly characteristics (vv. 3, 5). _____ 8

_____ 9

7. What did the Apostles do to the seven newly chosen disciples (v. 6)? _____ 10

8. The empowering of the Holy Spirit brought unity, the fear of God, signs and wonders, submission to God's given authority, and church order. What else took place (v. 7)?

PERSONAL

How can you serve at your church to lift the load from those who devote themselves to teach the Word?

STEPHEN ACCUSED

READ Acts 6:8-15.

1. DESCRIBE Stephen and his works of faith (v. 8). _____

2. Despite Stephen's powerful impact, who disputed with him (v. 9)? _____

_____ 11

3. What were these opposers of Christ not able to do (v. 10)? _____

4. How did they accuse and arrest Stephen (vv. 11-14)? _____

_____ 12

⁸ faith - Greek *pistis*: persuasion, conviction of religious truth, belief and reliance upon Christ and His Word as the truth itself, wholly trusting in God (See Hebrews 11:1).

⁹ power - Greek *dunamis*: miraculous, worker of miracles, strength, might and wonderful works.

¹⁰ laid hands: to set apart a disciple who is called of God for a specific ministry (see Numbers 27:18-23).

¹¹ Freedmen - Greek *Libertinon*: Jewish captives or slaves who had been set free.

¹² Jesus of Nazareth: name of Jesus the Son of God; the Son of Man raised in the town of Nazareth; the Nazarene.

5. As the council looked steadfastly, what did they see in Stephen's face (v. 15)? _____

PERSONAL

Have you ever been falsely accused? Explain. _____

How does this account of Stephen give you understanding or comfort? _____

STEPHEN'S DEFENSE

READ Acts 7:1-50.

A. The Call of Abraham (vv. 1-8)

1. What did Stephen declare to the high priest and the Sanhedrin¹³ (vv. 1, 2)? _____

14 15

2. God's divine call to Abraham was to leave what behind and go where (v. 3)? _____

3. What did Abraham do instead (v. 4)? _____

LOOK DEEPER

What did Jesus tell the multitudes that followed Him that they must forsake to be His disciple¹⁶ (Luke 14:26, 27, 33)?

¹³ Sanhedrin : the council of 71 members that had supreme executive, legislative, and judicial power over the Jewish faith and lifestyle, was limited in power only by Rome.

¹⁴ Mesopotamia - Hebrew *Aram* : situated between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers; modern day Iraq; Ur of the Chaldees (see Genesis 11:31).

¹⁵ Haran: Charran; the city of Nahor; Arab village still in existence.

¹⁶ disciple - Greek *adelphos* : brethren, believers, followers of Christ; a learner.

Peter and the disciples left all to follow Jesus. How did Jesus say they would be blessed in this life and the world to come (Luke 18:28-30)?

PERSONAL

What have you left behind to obey the divine call of Christ to become His disciple? _____

4. What was God's promise to Abraham although he was childless (Acts 7:5)? _____

5. God's declaration (vv. 6, 7)? _____

6. God's covenant (v. 8)? _____ ¹⁷

7. Who were Abraham's descendants? _____

Abraham lived his life putting his faith in God. He forsook all to obey God's call.

B. The Patriarch's ¹⁸ in Egypt (vv. 9-10)

8. Moved with envy, what did Joseph's brothers do to him (v. 9)? _____

Who was with Joseph? _____

9. How did God promote Joseph (v. 10)? _____

¹⁷ Covenant of circumcision : was a symbol given to Abraham that he might never forget that God promised to bless him; a sign transmitted from generation to generation.

¹⁸ Patriarchs: fathers of old; chief ancestors of a tribe or race; Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (see Acts 2:29, Hebrews 7:4).

LOOK DEEPER

What does the Word of God teach and warn about envy and jealousy?

Song of Solomon 8:6b _____

I Corinthians 13:4 _____

Galatians 5:19 _____

Titus 3:3 _____

James 3:16 _____

10. How did God arrange circumstances in Egypt so that Joseph could forgive his brothers and bless his family (Acts 7:11-14)?

11. How did Abraham's seed end up enslaved in Egypt (vv. 15-19)? _____

C. Moses, God's Deliverer (vv. 20-43)

12. After 400 years of bondage in Egypt, Moses, God's deliverer, was born. How did Stephen describe the character of their beloved Moses (vv. 20-29)?

13. What happened to Moses on Mt. Sinai after 40 years in the wilderness (v. 30)? _____

¹⁹ Angel of the Lord: a pre-incarnate manifestation of the Son of God (see Genesis 3:1-6).

14. Who is the LORD according to Deuteronomy 4:24a? _____

20

15. How did the Lord reveal Himself to Moses (Acts 7:32)? _____

PERSONAL

Do you have any ancestors who followed after God? Explain. _____

If you do, what can you learn from them? _____

If you don't, how can you reveal God to your descendants? _____

What spiritual legacy will you leave behind for your future descendants? _____

16. What did God command Moses to do? Why (v. 33)? _____

17. What did God see and hear of His people who were in Egypt (v. 34)? _____

18. How did God use Moses to deliver His people out of bondage (vs. 34b-36)? _____

²⁰ Jealous: God's zeal to protect and defend His loved ones (see II Corinthians 11:2).

19. What did Moses reveal concerning the coming Messiah (v. 37)? _____

21

LOOK DEEPER

Who addressed Jesus as a prophet? How did they describe Him?

Luke 7:11-16 _____

Luke 13:31-33 _____

Luke 24:13-27 _____

20. What did Stephen inspired by the Holy Spirit reveal about Moses (Acts 7:38)? _____

21. Stephen reminded his accusers of their forefathers' history of rejecting the Oracles of God²². What specific sin did Stephen bring back to their remembrance (vv. 39-41)?

23

What did the people do? _____

22. They worshiped the creation instead of the Creator. What warning did Stephen quote from the prophet Amos²⁴ (vv. 42, 43)?

²¹ prophet: a seer; one who foretells the future.

²² Oracles of God - Greek *logion* : a message from God; the Law of God; the Scriptures.

²³ Aaron: Moses' brother, priest of the Lord.

²⁴ Amos: Old Testament minor prophet who declared God's judgment on Judah, Israel, and the surrounding nations.

D. David, Solomon and the Temple (vv. 44-50)

23. Who found favor with God and what did he ask of Him (vv. 44-46)? _____

24. However, Solomon, David's son, built the temple where the Lord could be worshiped. What did God say through the prophet (Isaiah 66:1, 2a) concerning the temples that man built for Him (vv. 47-50)?

STEPHEN'S REBUKE

READ Acts 7:51-54.

1. What did Stephen call the unbelieving Jews? Why? Who did he compare them to (v. 51)? _____

2. What had their fathers done (v. 52a)? _____

3. Who did Stephen's accusers betray and murder (v. 52b)? _____²⁵

4. What had his accusers received from the angels and not kept (v. 53)? _____

5. What occurred to Stephen's accusers (v. 54)? _____

STEPHEN'S MARTYRDOM

READ Acts 7:55-60.

1. Being full of the Holy Spirit, what did Stephen do? What did the Holy Spirit reveal to him (v. 55)?

2. What did Stephen proclaim to his accusers (v. 56)? _____

²⁵ the Just One: Jesus Christ the Son of God.

3. Rejecting Stephen's teaching of the Word of God through the anointing²⁶ of the Holy Spirit had a severe affect on his accusers. What did their rebellion cause them to do (vv. 57, 58a)?

4. Who was the young man that witnessed the murder of Stephen (v. 58b)? _____

5. DESCRIBE the actions of Stephen, the first martyr of the church, at his death (vs. 59, 60)? _____

WRITE out the KEY VERSE _____

*And they continued steadfastly
in the Apostles Doctrine and fellowship,
in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.
Acts 2:42*

²⁶ anointing: act by which a person is consecrated for a particular office or ministry.

If you wish to receive any of the studies on THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES write to:

Somebody Loves You Publishing, 22324 Golden Springs Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765
(909) 396-1884 FAX: (909) 396-0553 Email: slymediagroup@somebodyloves.com

All Scripture found in this study is from the New King James Bible unless noted otherwise.

Due to the holy nature of God, the first letter of all references to Him,
His holy name, and His Word have been capitalized.

This study may be copied, reproduced, or duplicated with written permission.

©2007 Prepared by: Somebody Loves You Publishing